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SENATE MEMORIAL 2

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SPECIAL SESSION, 2008

INTRODUCED BY

John Pinto

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO URGE THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY TO EXPEDITE THE CLEANUP OF THE FORT WINGATE AMMUNITION DEPOT AND TO APPROPRIATE THE FUNDS NECESSARY FOR THAT PURPOSE.

WHEREAS, the Fort Wingate ammunition depot, located east of Gallup, sits among the red rocks along United States interstate 40, next to the Navajo Nation and the Pueblo of Zuni in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Fort Wingate occupies ancestral homelands of both the Navajo Nation and the Pueblo of Zuni; and

WHEREAS, Fort Wingate contains sites rich in cultural heritage and historical significance; and

WHEREAS, over two hundred Navajo ruins were discovered on the property, as well as several modern earth-covered

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1 dwellings, called "hogans"; and

2 WHEREAS, the property served for centuries as a hunting
3 and gathering area for the Zuni, and over six hundred
4 archaeological sites were recorded by surveyors, including an
5 additional two hundred ruins traceable to the Anasazi,
6 ancestors of the Zuni; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1918, the army established a munitions depot
8 at Fort Wingate; and

9 WHEREAS, from 1918 until its closure, the twenty-two-
10 thousand-acre installation stored and demolished ammunition;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Fort Wingate stored, conducted functional testing
13 of and demilitarized munitions, using open-burning detonation,
14 incineration and bomb washout as the principal demilitarization
15 methods, and these practices deposited ordnance-related waste
16 on and off the facility; and

17 WHEREAS, munitions testing, explosive washout activities,
18 rocket launches, training activities, open burn, open
19 detonation, demilitarization, ammunition packaging, storing,
20 shipping and munitions recycling and remanufacturing have
21 released contaminants into the ground water and the soil; and

22 WHEREAS, the aforementioned contaminants, as well as
23 asbestos and lead paint in buildings, buried waste and
24 unexploded ordnance, present human health and ecological
25 hazards at Fort Wingate; and

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1 WHEREAS, Fort Wingate is under the command of the United
2 States department of the army and is classified as a hazardous
3 waste treatment facility under the Hazardous Waste Act and the
4 federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976; and

5 WHEREAS, the United States department of the army, the
6 United States army corps of engineers and the bureau of Indian
7 affairs have taken collaborative efforts to clean up the site
8 and to return a large portion of Fort Wingate to the Navajo
9 Nation and the Pueblo of Zuni; and

10 WHEREAS, under current funding and appropriations toward
11 the cleanup of Fort Wingate by the United States, scheduled
12 compliance with cleanup efforts extends until the year 2020;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
14 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional delegation urge
15 the United States department of the army to expedite the
16 cleanup of Fort Wingate so that it may be returned to the
17 Navajo Nation and the Pueblo of Zuni and to appropriate the
18 funds necessary for that purpose; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
20 transmitted to United States Senator Pete V. Domenici, United
21 States Senator Jeff Bingaman, United States Representative Tom
22 Udall, United States Representative Steve Pearce, United States
23 Representative Heather Wilson, the president of the Navajo
24 Nation, the speaker of the Navajo Nation council and the
25 governor of the Pueblo of Zuni.

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